

Inside Report . . . *B. Rowland Evans and Robert Novak*

SNCC in Havana

THE SUDDEN appearance of Stokely Carmichael in Havana, rubbing elbows with Fidel Castro and the hemisphere's Communist guerrilla leaders, is an inevitable development in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's long evolution.

Sentimental white liberals who have consistently blinked away the worst about SNCC now attribute its alliance with Castro to deep disillusionment over Vietnam and civil rights. In fact, however, covert links between SNCC and Havana stretch back at least to 1964.

The flamboyant Carmichael is merely the outward manifestation of the SNCC Cuban alliance, not its cause. The principal responsibility for moving SNCC violently to the left must go to two men who, unlike Carmichael, seldom appear on television or the front page.

One is James Forman, who today holds no formal office in SNCC but is still believed to be its most important internal force. When SNCC was spawned in the Southern sit-in movement in February, 1960, by idealistic Negro college students, Forman was already a hardened radical and an associate of Negro terrorist Robert Williams (who fled to Cuba to escape Federal prosecution).

The other man is even less familiar to the public than Forman. He is Jack Minnis, a white intellectual radical who, as an instructor at Tulane University in 1961, was a leader in pro-Castro activities in the New Orleans area. With Forman in absolute control of the SNCC apparatus, Minnis was named to its central committee and given command of its research operation. Despite SNCC's current blacks-only policy, Minnis still wields backstage influence.

BY THE TIME of the Mississippi Summer Project in 1964, SNCC's admiration for Castroism was apparent. SNCC workers were distributing Castroite propaganda and material printed in Cuba by exile Williams advocating guerrilla warfare by American Negroes and describing how Molotov cocktails could be used in American cities.

The clearest revelation of SNCC's link with Havana, however, did not come until 1966 when SNCC leader Julian Bond was barred from his seat in the Georgia Legislature. His case was being ably handled by white lawyer Charles Morgan of the Atlanta office of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). Morgan is a civil libertarian but no radical.

Suddenly a new face appeared: Victor Rabinowitz, a Manhattan lawyer long associated with far left causes and a leader in the National Lawyers Guild and the Emergency Civil Liberties Committee organizations specializing in defending Communists. Rabinowitz served as legal counsel in the United States for the Castro government and had intimate contacts in Havana.

Forman insisted that Rabinowitz supplant Morgan as Bond's attorney. In accord-



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ance with standard ACLU practice of deferring to other attorneys, Morgan stepped aside.

At about the same time, SNCC's treasury — empty since the disaffection of white liberal contributors — suddenly began to fill again. It is believed by many close to SNCC that the new money came from Cuba.

ALTHOUGH there is no documentary evidence to support this suspicion, it makes sense. At precisely this time in 1966, Castro abandoned his Moscow-ordered policy of cooperating only with the regular Communist parties throughout

the Hemisphere. He declared he would support, with arms and money, any revolutionary movements Communist or not. In the United States, SNCC would qualify for such help.

Nor has there been much doubt lately about SNCC's revolutionary nature. After this year's Negro riots at Jackson (Miss.) State College, Mississippi SNCC leaders met secretly to discuss plans for more effective "guerrilla warfare" in the future. In recent weeks, there has been serious discussion inside SNCC about how to limit destruction to white property in future rioting and avoid destroying Negro property.

Outsiders who know SNCC best disagree in assessing the seriousness of such plans. Some believe SNCC has played a part in most of the major riots; others believe SNCC is far too disorganized for that. But effective or not, there is no longer any doubt that SNCC today is Fidel Castro's arm in the United States.

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